

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome to the stage Katie Taylor, executive director of the Center for Interfaith Action, and William Vendley, secretary general of the World Conference of Religions for Peace, accompanied by honored leaders of the faith community. (Applause.)

KATIE TAYLOR: Good afternoon. We're delighted to announce a global multi-religious commitment to adopt and promote 10 behaviors critical to child survival; 10 promises to our children, to all our children. A year ago, we were asking ourselves if we could get all the faith leaders in the world to say 10 things – the same 10 things – what would be the things that would most impact child survival?

If we could get all the faith communities in the world to work together on 10 things – pragmatic, concrete actions, life-saving acts – what would they be? And so we worked with UNICEF. We worked with others to look at what those top 10 simple things would be that are within the reach of individuals, families and communities. And we're delighted to be here today to present them to you.

WILLIAM VENDLEY: Thank you, Katie. We are so pleased about this because these 10 behavior changes are ones that every single person, every family and every community can embrace. We all know that for most people in the world numerically – many, many people – their faith is unspeakably precious to them. This initiative will help every religious tradition express its own religious support for these 10 actions.

So if you will, people will understand from their own religion that this is a duty of their own religious practice to practice these behaviors. This initiative is going to connect families to local resources and it'll do that in part by recognizing that in fact people gather in mosques, in churches and in temples, and that those can be a way in which people can be directed to all kinds of other services – services ministries are doing, NGOs are doing and the private sector is doing. This initiative will reach large numbers of people, including the hard-to-reach people.

I think all of us in this room that have traveled and have gone to the small villages find that the religious communities are already there. And there's a way to reach from capitals to districts onto small villages through the religious communities.

And while these behavior changes themselves will save lives, they will also drive demand for many of the services that those of you in this room are offering. If you know that you should use ORT salts, you'll ask for them. If you know that vaccines will save your children's lives, you'll go searching for vaccines.

So we believe this will drive demand for the very needed products and services. We've just begun. And I'm happy to share that already 202 religious leaders – many of them very senior figures – have committed to this initiative. Sixty faith-based organizations over just the last few days have signed onto this. Many are in this room. They include faith-based development organizations.

But they also include interreligious councils and religious-run organizations. Already we have religious leaders in 45 countries and of extreme importance in the five priority states. We can and are targeting to reach over 250 million believers through this initiative. And we are literally getting people by the minute coming to join this initiative. Dr. Mohammed el-Senussi is here – and, Mohammed, you had some news please?

MOHAMMED EL-SENUSSI: I do. Thank you so much, Dr. Vendley. And I'm delighted to break the good news. Dr. Vendley has a longstanding partnership with His Excellency Faisal al-Muaammar, the director of the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz – the king of Saudi Arabia – International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue.

We just received the news that the center has committed itself to advancing child survival through multi-religious efforts to advance behavior change. The center will make a major contribution to this initiative. Thank you. (Applause.)

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